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Borrelli's Changes Hands!

Legendary Don Smeriglio has sold Borrelli's Deli on Merrimack Street, Methuen so we sat down with Don and the new owners, the Tomaccio Family, on the Paying Attention! Podcast to talk about the future of Borrelli's.

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Valley Patriot of the Month

Robert "Boots" Chouniard! World War II Veteran

John Cuddy
VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

Still working out on a Rowing machine at 99!

Despite the fact that I arrived with a two-pound box of Tripoli's cookies, ninety-nine-year-old US Army Veteran Salisbury's Robert "Boots" Chouniard, spent a good part of our time together, on his rowing machine, vigorously working out. He walks a mile a day, rows, lifts weights, and travels worldwide. Boots spends part of each winter in Florida. In March of 2022, he spent six days with the New England Wounded Veterans visiting Amsterdam, Luxembourg, Belgium and Germany and on June 6, 2022 he re-visited Normandy and attended the 78th Anniversary of D-Day events in Sainte-Mere-Eglise, France with his daughter Mary Ann. Robert also participated in an "Honor Flight" to the World War II Memorial in 2022, spending four days in our Nation's capital with his brother Veterans.

While attending Newburyport High School during the war, Boots and his friends, would go to school all day, then work second shift in the machine shop of Lawson Machine & Tool in Malden, Massachusetts. Lawson Machine was a Defense plant manufacturing aircraft parts vital to the war. Boots said during the interview that "common sense" was more prevalent in our American education system back then. His high school principal felt that the young men's work in the defense plant manufacturing aircraft parts was essential, and simply graduated the young men from high school. Free from attending class, Boots and his friends could focus on the war effort, either by working in a defense plant, or serving in the military. His nickname "Boots", dates from going to the corner store as a child, in Newburyport during foul weather with oversized rubber boots on, while doing errands for his mom. Growing up he had six sisters and a younger brother.

He shared fond memories of growing up in Newburyport, at a time when children played football, baseball,

and basketball, all day in the parks, in unorganized, "sandlot" games, without adults running the play. He recalled shoveling snow in downtown Newburyport during the Depression and delivering ice to homes with "ice boxes". Then and now, Boots loved sports. While I visited, he rowed, lifted weights, and talked about his new exercise bike that was getting delivered later that weekend.

Out of school, he attended one-year of prep school in Virginia and then he joined

HERO: PAGE 20

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Woke Committee Attacks An Ethnic Minority in Andover

A mob of thousands, primarily white men, surrounded a jail in a southern city with calls for the death of 9 prisoners, 6 of which were just acquitted after a murder trial with 3 others receiving a mistrial.

The mob included many notable citizens, with future mayors and governors among the crowd as they called for their own version of justice after our legal system already found the majority of them not guilty of their alleged crimes.

The crowd would not be satisfied until these 9 men were put to death. Part of the mob breached the prison gates and dragged not just the 9 men they were after, but others from the same ethnic minority from their cells, beating, shooting, and mutilating them while dragging them out of the jail.

The 9 men, and two others were hung, and the mob cheered at the display of the mutilated bodies. It was March 14, 1891, the city was New Orleans, and the victims were Italian American immigrants. Italian immigrants poured into Louisiana in the aftermath of the Civil War, performing the labor that had previously been done by the recently freed slaves. They worked hard, were a tightknit and religious group with strong families and internal support systems, but were not welcomed as true equals, and looked upon as 'less than' other white Americans.

What's more, they didn't support the Jim Crowlaws used to continue to oppress the southern Blacks. While this lynching was the worst, and the most notable instance of violence against the Italian American community, it was far from the only time that Italian immigrants, especially southern Italians, and Sicilians, suffered at the hands of their fellow Americans, that suffering wasn't limited to just violence or southern cities either. In publications such as the New York Times, Italian immigrants were slandered even being identified as "links in a descending chain of evolution" and the story of another Italian lynching victim in Mississippi was called "Dago Joe."

The editors of the Times wrote "There has never been since New York was founded so low and ignorant a class among the immigrants who poured in here as the Southern Italians who have been crowding our docs recently" and other articles lamented that their children were to be educated among the children of more decent Americans.

The lynching caused a great strain in the relationship between the United States and Italy, and it brought to the forefront the issue of the treatment and persecution of Italian Americans. Faced with such an outrage, and in advance of the 400th anniversary of Columbus voyage to America, President Benjamin Harrison proclaimed that Columbus Day shall be celebrated "as a general holiday for the people of the United States," but the proclamation did more than just create a new holiday, it sought to help weave the Italian American community into the very fabric of our great nation.

It was, and continues to be, a source of pride among Italian Americans and is a chance to reflect on the great contributions of not just Columbus, but of all Italian Americans to our country's history.

Columbus may not have been the first to 'discover' America, and he didn't land in the continental United States, but what

COLUMBUS: PAGE 10

Bringing Local Aid to Methuen and Haverhill

Ryan Hamilton
STATE REP., LAWRENCE/HAVERHILL

During the last week of April, the House of Representatives, at its budget week, I am proud to report that the Methuen delegation, comprised of myself, Representative Estela Reyes and Representative Francisco Paulino secured $175,000 in local earmarks. I secured $50,000 for mental health resources in Methuen Public Schools, $25,000 for the Cogswell art centre in Haverhill, and $25,000 for improvements to Forest Lake.

These funds will ensure that our students will receive the mental health resources they deserve, that we will have a Location for artists in the Merrimack Valley to go and express their creativity, and that we are ensuring our local natural resources are maintained so residents can enjoy them.

Some statewide highlights from the house budget include $161 million for universal school meals in the Commonwealth, $100 million for Green school works, $50 million for high-demand targeted scholarships, and $315 million for children's behavioral health initiatives.

In the house budget, the City of Haverhill would receive $94.5 million, $82.63 million in Chapter 70 funding and $11.57 million in unrestricted local aid.

Methuen will receive $71.18 million in local aid, $64.68 million in Chapter 70 funding, and $6.4 million in unrestricted local aid.

Both Methuen and Haverhill saw drastic increases in funding in the FY 24 house budget compared to the FY 23 house budget.

It was a pleasure working with representative Andy Vargas, representative Francisco Paulino, and representative Estela Reyes to deliver for the cities of Methuen and Haverhill.

This past week I introduced "Rep'd" to my constituents. Rep's is a program that will allow me to connect directly with constituents through a series of videos. The way Rep'd works is that constituents go to https://www.repd.us/ryan and submit a question that they would like to ask me.

Once that question is posted, they will get it to vet a video response from me answering the question. Rep'd New technology will allow my office to become more transparent and interact directly with constituents on concerns that matter to them. I'm excited to use it, and I decided to interact with constituents, so please, if you have any questions, go to my Rep'd account, and submit them.

It certainly has been a hectic few weeks on Beacon Hill and from a personal perspective, I have participated in several committee hearings.

I am currently a member of the committees on Financial Services, Higher Education, Municipalities and Regional Government, and The Census and Federal Stimulus.

I'm thankful to Speaker Ron Mariano for picking me to serve on these committees, and I look forward to helping shape legislation with my colleagues on the committees.

If anyone would like to appear in

front of these committees to give personal testimony on a specific piece of legislation, don't hesitate to contact my office, as we can help you arrange that. You can also contact my office if you'd prefer to send in written testimony to the committee.

You can email me at ryan10hamilton@gmail.com ◊

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SEE OUR COUPON ON PAGE 22

My Priorities in the State Budget is YOU!

Francisco Paulino
STATE REP., LAWRENCE/METHUEN

As a state representative, I am proud to announce that we have secured significant funding for both Lawrence and Methuen in this year's budget.

Lawrence Chapter 70 will receive $266,144,831, an increase of $25,438,040 from FY23, while Methuen will receive $64,681,414, an increase of $8,080,389.

Chapter 70 is the state law that governs education funding. These funds are crucial for supporting our schools and ensuring that our students have access to the resources they need to succeed.

In addition to these investments in education, this year's budget also includes measures to bolster our communities through Unrestricted General Government Aid. Lawrence will receive $23,108,539, an increase of $363,914, while Methuen will receive $6,424,335 in unrestricted aid. This funding will help our cities address important needs and continue to thrive.

But our work doesn't stop there. We also secured the CISM Grant of $95,210 for Lawrence and Methuen's first responders, providing them with important mental health resources to support their critical work.

Furthermore, we are proud to have secured $4.75 million in funding for re-entry workforce development. This funding will improve workforce re-entry opportunities for individuals after incarceration, helping them gain valuable skills and find stable, well-paying jobs. And we have secured an additional $5 million for registered apprenticeship expansion, creating even more opportunities for individuals to learn and succeed.

But while we celebrate these victories, we must also remain vigilant in protecting the health and well-being of our constituents. That's why we included language in the bill to protect coverage for preventive care, particularly in light of the recent ruling in Kelley vs. Becerra. This decision puts the health and well-being of millions of Americans at risk, and we must act swiftly to safeguard our communities.

I am proud to continue working towards improving the quality of life for every resident of Lawrence and Methuen. These first 100 days have been productive, but there is much more to be done. Together, we can address the challenges facing our communities and build a brighter future for all . ◊

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Mayor DePeña Welcomes Congresswoman Trahan to Discuss Fixing Bridges in Lawrence

Lawrence Mayor Brian DePeña, alongside other elected officials, welcomed Congresswoman Lori Trahan to Lawrence City Hall, for a very productive meeting to discuss Lawrence's infrastructure priorities and projects, in particular the bridges in Lawrence that are in serious disrepair.

Consequently, Congresswoman Trahan says she is committed to ensuring these projects in Lawrence receive funding support.

"All bridges are critical components of a nation's infrastructure, making it possible to carry goods to factories, warehouses, suppliers, and businesses," Mayor DePeña said.

"When a bridge closes, even for a short time, economic activity slows and greatly affects people's way of life. I'm very excited to work hand in hand with Congresswoman Lori Trahan, State Senator Pavel Payano, the State Delegation, City Counselors, and the Department of Public Works (DPW) to keep working for our great City of Lawrence and give it back to the people!"

Congresswoman Trahan said she was grateful to Mayor DePeña for the opportunity to discuss the long-needed repairs to bridges in Lawrence.

"Strengthening our infrastructure and making our bridges safer for every family that drives across them has been a priority for me in Congress," Trahan said.

"We have delivered millions in infrastructure funding through the American Rescue Plan and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to communities across the Third District. I will continue to work closely with Mayor DePeña and our colleagues on Beacon Hill to advocate for the resources necessary to get Lawrence's infrastructure projects across the finish line," she committed.

"In a city divided by three rivers and connected by multiple bridges, proper maintenance is of paramount importance to ensure the safety of its citizens, as well as to safeguard the historical significance of these vital transportation links that contribute to the city's identity and economy," State Senator Pavel Payano said.

"Congresswoman Trahan's visit to Lawrence underscores the urgency of the situation and highlights the need for cooperation between federal, state, and local officials to address the issue."

Payano said his office is committed securing the money needed to make bridge repairs possible, and make sure the safety of the community is a top priority for the state.

The past year, State Representative Frank Moran ensured and committed $3 million for Lawrence bridge repairs in the FY23 climate change bill. This funding will provide necessary safety improvements to Lawrence's aging infrastructure use.

"Ensuring that our city's drivers and pedestrians are safe from crumbling bridges and infrastructure is of the utmost importance," Moran said.

"I am proud to have recently secured the $3 million in funding to repair and upkeep four bridges in Lawrence," said State Representative Frank Moran,

Representative Estela Reyes thanked Congresswoman Trahan for her ongoing partnership with the state Legislature and committed to working with Trahan in the months ahead to make sure Lawrence residents "are provided with the transportation infrastructure that they deserve."

"Working together to improve our community, the quality of our roads and bridges is our number one priority, she added. "It's the only way to continue growing and moving our Lawrence Community forward."

Meeting with Trahan were Mayor DePeña, State Senator Pavel Payano, State Representatives Francisco Paulino and Estela Reyes, Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Jorge Jaime, City Council President Marc Laplante and members of the City Council. ◊

Addressing the Shortage of Qualified Mental Health Providers

Pavel Payano
STATE SENATOR, 1ST ESSEX DISTRICT

As your State Senator, I am committed to ensuring that every resident in our state has access to the quality mental health care they need and deserve. Mental health challenges can impact anyone, regardless of age, background, or socioeconomic status. Unfortunately, there are significant barriers to accessing mental health care, including cost, stigma, and a shortage of qualified providers. Left untreated, mental health conditions can have devastating effects on individuals, their families, and our communities, leading to substance abuse, unemployment, and even suicide. That's why it's critical that we take steps to increase access to mental health services, so that individuals and families can receive the support they need to lead healthier, happier, and more productive lives.

Senate Bill 210 is a crucial piece of legislation that aims to increase access to mental health services by addressing the shortage of qualified providers. As the demand for mental health services continues to rise, it's essential that we provide opportunities for individuals to pursue careers in this field. Currently, the licensing requirements for mental health counselors in Massachusetts are quite stringent, making it difficult for qualified school counselors to obtain licensure. This means that many potential mental health professionals are unable to practice, despite their education and experience.

By expanding licensure opportunities for school counselors, Senate Bill 210 can increase the pool of qualified mental health professionals in our state. This change would allow more school counselors to become licensed mental health counselors, thereby expanding their scope of practice and increasing their ability to serve students in need. School counselors who have completed a master's degree in a relevant field and have two additional years of supervised clinical experience would be eligible to sit for the written or oral examination for licensure as a mental health counselor. This would help to bridge the gap in access to mental health services, particularly for young people, who may struggle to find a mental health provider who specializes in working with children and adolescents.

It's important to note that school counselors are uniquely positioned

MENTAL HEALTH: PAGE 18

New owners of Borrelli's Deli, Jim and Paul Tomaccio, of Methuen on the Paying Attention! Podcast discussing their future plans to add menu items, increase hours of operations and stressed they are not going to change any of the current menu items.

Tomaccios Say No Changes For Borrelli's Menu Except New Items, Expanded Hours

When Methuen icon Don Smeriglio announced last month that he was selling Borrelli's Deli on Merrimack Street, his customers panicked. All over social media, local residents expressed concern that the new owners may change the menu items and thereby change the unique nature of Borrelli's.

A week after Borrelli's was purchased by the Tomaccio family of Methuen last month, Paul and Jim Tomaccio appeared on the Paying Attention! Podcast with (now former owner) Don Smeriglio to talk about the turnover.

People are in a panic, they are afraid you are going to do away with some of the menu items that they love. Do you have any plans on changing any of the existing meals or signature sandwiches?

"Absolutely not," Paul Tomaccio said.

"We are going to add menu items, but we are not going to be changing any of the existing items or specialties that Borrelli's Deli customers have come to love over the years."

"Don is a legend, Jim Tomaccio added.

"We have been going there for years. I actually knew Jenny and Billy Borrelli. It's kind of surreal to be here now. As far as moving forward with Borrelli's, we are looking at opening Sundays. We are not going to do it right away, we are going to go slow, take our time, and make sure everyone there is comfortable and we really know the business. There are so many moving parts to any business, and it takes an adjustment."

"We are blessed by the people Don put in place so, I say 'if it's not broke, you don't have to fix it'.

We aren't going to change anything. We may put our thumb print on a few new things."

LATER HOURS

"We are looking at staying open later in the evenings," Jimmy Tomaccio continued. "People say to me, you drive by there on your way to work and they are closed. Then when you drive by on your way home, they are closed. The only day for them to come is Saturday. So, again, not right away but we are looking to stay open a little later."

Jim said that his son Paul is an amazing chef with great ideas. We asked Paul what his ideas were for upcoming new menu items.

"We are definitely trying to keep everything the same. All of the existing menu, the sandwiches, the meals to go, the sausage, all of that is going to stay the same. But we do want to make some additions. Maybe some extra meals to go where we can add some of our family specialties, while keeping what they already have. We'd like to introduce our family recipe for sausage as well. So, we are going to have a Tomaccio family recipe just added on the end of the sausage menu that they already have."

A NEW PREMIUM MENU

"I also want to introduce an artisan lineup of sandwiches. There are so many super high-quality meats out there that people in the area don't use. I really want to incorporate that into a premium menu. So, we are still going to offer what we've got and what Don has established, but introduce some different items and put our thumb print on it that way."

The clientele that Don has built up over the years is incredible and that's just by word of mouth. Now to keep that well-oiled machine and implement what we know about social media, the world is our oyster.

Asked if they had any other new ideas for menu items. Paul said that while they have no plans for pizza, they are considering spinach and/or meat pies.

"I just want to emphasize again, for all of Borrelli's customers, the only thing set in stone is that what's already there is going to stay there. We are not going to do away with any of the current items on the Borrelli's menu.

BORRELLI'S: PAGE 17

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Money for Local Groups Now in the State Budget

Estela Reyes
STATE REP., LAWRENCE/METHUEN

As the state representative for Methuen and Lawrence I have been focused on how the state's budget can benefit my constituents in both communities.

When putting the state budget together, legislators are allowed to request "earmarks" for our districts. An earmark is when the legislature votes to allocate a specific amount of money for a specific project or non-profit requested by a representative.

I spent the bulk of my time last month on the House budget process trying to increase funding for the people of Methuen and Lawrence.

After much debate and discussion, I was able to secure $100,000 in local earmarks. Now, as a freshman representative this was no easy task, as these earmarks usually go to representatives who have been in the legislature the longest and have the most power on Beacon Hill.

Here are the earmarks I was able to secure in the House version of the budget bill:

* $25,000 - Beyond Soccer, Inc.

According to their website, Beyond Soccer is a sports-based youth development organization in Boxford that uses soccer to connect Lawrence youth to new experiences that build confidence and create opportunities for leadership, healthy living & academic achievement.

* $25,000 - Three Saints, Inc. (St. Alfio's Society)

The Saint Alfio's Society is a Catholic organization of Italian Americans who raise money for local charities through their annual Feast of the Three Saints on Common St. in Lawrence on Labor Day weekend. Over the last twenty years, The St. Alfio's Society Organization has donated to various charitable organizations such as Lawrence History Center, Holy Rosary Shrine, Daybreak Shelter, National Pancreatic Cancer Foundation, Fidelity House, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Kiwanis Club, Lawrence Central Little League, American Red Cross, Creative Living, American Cancer Society, Methuen Festival of Trees, Central Catholic, Corpus Christi Parish, Bread & Roses, Camp Fatima, Holy Name Society, Saint Rita Sodality, New England Veterans Liberty House, Essex County Community Foundation, Immigrant City Archives, Professional Center for Child Development, Lawrence Heritage State Park, Methuen Firefighters Local 1691, YMCA, YWCA, Lawrence Vietnam Memorial, CLASS, Inc., and Lazarus House.

* $25,000 - Methuen Senior Center

As the representative for Methuen, I have heard your concerns for the need to provide better services to our seniors. During the campaign last year, Methuen voters told me over and over how Methuen seniors need more funding through the Senior Center. As someone who truly admires the great work of those who run the Senior Center, it has always been a huge priority for me to assist in allowing seniors to age in place.

I believe this is a good start towards increasing the amount of money needed to provide those services through the center. After many phone calls and meetings with state officials I was really happy for the people of Methuen that we were able to get this $25,000 and will continue to fight for more funding as we move forward.

* $25,000 - Merrimack Valley Prevention and Substance Abuse Project (MVPASAP).

There is no doubt that Phil Lahey and the people at MVPASAP are doing the work of the angels to help families deal with the opioid crisis and educate people on the devastation it has caused to so many of our families here in the Merrimack Valley. For years, the people at MVPASAP have done incredible work with very little funding and for a long time spending their own money to help the community.

I cannot tell you how honored I was to be in a position to bring home money for these organizations. I also want to thank Reps. Paulino and Hamilton.

As a side note, I am planning to add monthly office hours at City Hall and the Methuen Arlington Neighborhood in the upcoming month.

The state budget passed by the house, now moves to the state senate before these earmarks are finalized. In the coming weeks I will be working with Senator Payano to make sure these earmarks are approved.

If you have any questions, ideas, or concerns about the state budget please feel free to reach out to my office at Thomas.Baranowski@mahouse.gov. ◊

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with
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Please Answer in the Form of a Quorum

Philippe Thibault
VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

The first Monday in the month of June is Dracut's Spring Town Meeting. All the articles for the warrant are in and recorded. There are forty-five articles this year on an array of topics. The Spring Town Meeting by Town Charter is supposed to be predominately related to fiscal matters, budgets, and expenditures. The first eighteen articles will be dealing with these actions. That leaves twenty-seven articles dealing with street acceptances, zoning reform and the main attraction at the end of the night. A feasibility study for a new middle school in east Dracut's Kenwood District Campbell School. The Town needs at least two hundred and fifty registered voters in attendance to reach quorum, the minimum number of votes that must be in attendance to conduct business for the body politic.

If you follow other towns and their town meetings, most people will estimate the time required for a meeting of this magnitude will be several nights over the course of a week or two. In every other bucolic hamlet in New England, I would say you were correct. Please leave your preconceived notions at the check in tables. I will draw your attention to Phil's Town Meeting Theorem: Dracut Town Meeting will last only two and a half hours. You may believe that the number of articles has a strong determination in this formula. It does not. The articles are the constant of the equation. Sure, the volume of articles will change from meeting to meeting, but within a single meeting it is the constant. The variable is the time spent on each article.

I have been at town meeting where an eighty-five-million-dollar budget was approved by unanimous vote in less than forty-five seconds, while the acceptance of a portion of road in the hinterlands of Dracut garnered nearly three quarters of an hour of debate. That meeting ended in two hours. The shortened time does not inspire citizens to attend, however. There is always a plea to attain this elusive count. There was a movement several years ago to set the quorum at zero by the administration and some selectmen. Their argument being, "anyone not in attendance didn't want to participate." I spoke in opposition stating, "there are people that cannot make Town Meeting because of other commitments. They may have a night job, school, a meeting, or are a caregiver to a family member or friend. It is for these people that we must honor the requirement of quorum." I do have a fear that without participation our purist form of democracy is a phantom veil for oligarchies. This is a bait and switch that too many politicians understand and use to their advantage.

These same politicians in Dracut have perfected the art of turning laws into weapons. A friend had a conflict-of-interest complaint filed against him at the attorney general's office because he spoke at town meeting on a subject he had "an interest "in. How ludicrous is it to say that a democratic forum that is reliant on the individual in not by its nature self-preserving and self-interested. Politicians, including the current Chair of the Dracut Board of Selectmen, will often play both ends of the field: violating the very regulations and laws they want you to follow while admonishing you for questioning their integrity. Just recently, a member of that administration proclaimed several times that they "are an honest person." I am still counting my spoons.

Has Town Meeting run its course for a community like Dracut. A municipality with thirty-three thousand residents, twenty thousand registered voters and a less than two percent of those are required to turnout for a June Town Meeting. There is talk of the selectmen forming a Charter Review Commission, whom they will appoint, to scour over the forty-year-old document. Are we asking a barber if we need a haircut? I believe the Town and its citizens would be better served by an elected Charter Commission to promote an independent examination. I know the senior selectman has a disdain for independent commissions or thinkers for that matter.

I will be in attendance on June 5th at the High School Center for the Performing Arts to participate in a long tradition as I have for many years. There is only one way to revitalize participation at Town Meeting and that is to participate. Every voice and every vote do matter. ◊

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Every day when we walk out the door, there is always the possibility that it may be our "last" time. You wouldn't walk out the door without your wallet; if you fail to plan for your Family's future, that's exactly what you may be doing.

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Moderator DiSalvo Explains North Andover Town Meeting - Hilights Warrant Items

North Andover Town Moderator Mark DiSalvo appears on the Paying Attention! Podcast at the Studio 21 Podcast Cafe in Salem, N.H. to discuss Annual Town Meeting. You can watch the full video on Youtube or visit The Valley Patriot Facebook page and go to "VIDEOS".

North Andover Town Moderator Mark DiSalvo appeared on the Paying Attention! Podcast last week to educate the public on the process of Annual Town Meeting (which is May 16th) and some of the warrant items on the agenda for this year. The Paying Attention! Podcast is filmed at the Studio 21 Podcast Café in Salem, N.H.

WHAT IS TOWN MEETING, HOW FAIR IS IT?

"It's really easy to be efficient if you are not fair. That's why fair comes first. Everybody deserves the opportunity to express an opinion, and everyone deserves to feel comfortable to express their opinions. This is the most important part, the folks who come to town meeting go immediately from residents to legislators. Town meeting is the legislative body for the community of North Andover. We have been this way since 1646. It's the longest active continuing body politic in the world. Every vote matters, and every single resident who attends has a voice as long as they are a registered voter."

HOW DO WARRANT ITEMS GET ON THE TOWN MEETING AGENDA?

"Obviously the Select Board and the other bodies in town can submit an item. But, for a citizen petition, it takes a whopping number of ten citizens to petition the select board and then [the town is] required to put that item on the Town Meeting Warrant."

"There we have five citizen petitions that cover a wide variant of issues on the town meeting warrant that will determine the outcome exclusively, without interference from the select board or the school committee or any other town body. It is exclusively up to the citizens attending town meeting to vote up or down on those citizen petition articles."

"So, a citizen gets signatures from ten registered voters, and the town gets to discuss and vote on that measure. That's it!"

THIS YEAR'S CITIZEN PETITIONS

ARTICLE 13: "William Sims is the most consequential patriot in America."

"In 1788 Town Meeting sent three individuals to the Constitutional Convention and were instructed by the town to vote against ratifying the U.S. Constitution."

"Then he sat back and listened."

"The constitutional convention was literally 50/50 at that time whether to support or not support the ratification of the constitution. Sims decided to get up and announce that he changed his mind. His vote was widely heralded and widely covered across the nation."

"As a result, Massachusetts was the 6th state to ratify the constitution. Had it not passed many of the other states would not have ratified it."

"This item was submitted by a group of 8th grade students in the middle school who decided that what happened to Sims after his return was inappropriate. He was ignored and shunned, his law practice was shuddered, and he was literally driven out of town and moved to Portland Maine to never return."

"They are asking the community to acknowledge that, and that Mr. Sims deserved better treatment by the town."

ARTICLE 14: BANNING PLASTIC BAGS

"This was brought forth by the North Andover Sustainability Committee which has put an item on the Town Warrant asking to ban plastic bags that are utilized in businesses with more than 6,000 square feet. I believe there are sixty of them in town."

ARTICLE 15 An act to Amend Town Bylaws at Annual Town Meeting

"This is a request asking; should town meeting have to [be extended] to a second

DISALVO: PAGE 23

Apathy Wins North Andover in a Landslide

Kevin Dube
CHAIR N. ANDOVER GOP TOWN COMMITTEE

On March 28th of this year North Andover held its annual town elections. There were contested races for both School Committee and Housing Authority.

Out of 22,110 registered voters only 2,225 took the time to vote. Only 10.1% of all registered voters came out that day. Over the last 3 years average turnout has been under 14%. Compare that with 57% turnout for the 2022 midterms and 82.5% for the 2020 Presidential election. This is not just a North Andover problem. Looking around the Merrimack valley you won't find any town that averages anything close to even 20% in their town elections. Andover, which held their election the same day as North Andover, only had an 8% turnout in their town elections, even with several positions contested, including moderator.

Why is there such apathy in town elections? Why are people so much more likely to turn out for statewide or Presidential elections than they are for their local representation? Arguably, elected town representatives touch on our daily lives more so than any other elected office holders. The select board appoints members to most of the boards and committees in town, as well as the town manager. The town moderator appoints the finance committee, that then develops and guides the town budget as well as the school building committee. These locally-elected individuals decide how your tax dollars are spent as well as promote the future nature of the town in which you live.

In my opinion, the most important board is the school committee. Not only does the school budget consume over half of your tax dollars, but the school committee yields tremendous power in how our children will be educated, and what values will be promoted. As the song says, the children are our future - what they learn in school directly shapes the citizens they will become, and how they will influence the future of our country. When knocking on doors during my campaign for school committee there was a specific topic of discussion that came up quite often. Many of these voters did not have children in the school system, and they explicitly expressed that it was irrelevant who actually sat on the school committee. In fact, some felt that they didn't deserve a say in how the schools taught the future generation of Americans. People also seem to underestimate the power the school committee has in terms of developing and setting district-wide policy. While it is true the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) promulgates frameworks for our schools, cities and towns have latitude in implementing those frameworks when developing curriculum. Your vote for a strong school committee member may just be the most important vote you cast in local elections.

There are more registered Republicans in North Andover than people who voted in the last two town elections. This is the area where we can make the most impact. This year I ran an aggressive campaign. I highlighted all of the areas in which our schools are doing everything conservatives want to stop. This aggressive stance was expected to drive turnout on both sides, but it did not. The apathy on the left is understandable - they are winning without much effort, and they expect to win. Conservatives need to stop expecting to lose. Over five thousand people in North Andover cast ballots for every Republican candidate in the 2022 mid-term elections. If even half of those had shown up for the town election I would have won by a large margin, if all of them had shown up we would have had more votes cast than in any town election in at least ten years if not ever. This is how we turn the tide and return to winning. The left will remain apathetic, the turnout will continue to be low, and that's how we will win.

To do this we need strong candidates and active people to support and promote them.

I can guarantee the Democrats already are planning for the next town elections, as well as the state representative and senate elections next year. We need to do so as well.

We need a great deal of involvement and enthusiasm in order to win. I can be reached at northandovergop@gmail.com, drop me an email and let me know you want to start winning. ◊

EDITORIAL: COLUMBUS FROM 2

he did do was permanently reunite the native population, who originally came across the Bering Strait land bridge from Asia and were cut off from the rest of human kind until Columbus, and those who followed, permanently reunited our civilizations.

Italians-Americans make up the 7th largest census reported ethnic group in our nation, with many living in the Merrimack Valley. They manned factories, built roads, bridges, tunnels, and other infrastructure.

A fiercely patriotic group, many Italian Americans served in the United States military during WWII where they fought against their native (or near native) country. Through the celebration of Columbus Day, and their many contributions, Italians are now seen as an equal, contributing ethnic group in our society…unless, of course, you are at a DEI commission meeting in Andover, Massachusetts.

Recently, the DEI commission (as ironic as this is given the history of Columbus Day and the history surrounding the treatment of Italian immigrants in our nation's history) has requested that the Town of Andover 'cancel' Columbus Day, and instead, replace it with Indigenous People's Day.

While they have acknowledged that perhaps a day to recognize the contributions of Italian Americans may be appropriate, they are seeking to end a holiday that does essentially that.

Many have not heard of Andover's DEI commission and it is unfortunate that their first high profile initiative is to tearing down what was one of the most important 'DEI initiatives' in history, (despite it not being called that at the time), instead of building up the sense of community and being inclusive of all, which should be their core mission.

Italian Americans, The Valley Patriot included, find this offensive and anything but "inclusive."

While we support a day to celebrate "Indigenous People," (even though they were immigrants as well) we suggest any of the other 364 viable options, including August 9th, a day that was established as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples by the United Nations 41 years ago.

We hope that the Board of Selectmen and the good people of Andover see this initiative of the DEI commission for what it is, a blatant attack on an ethnic group that has suffered decades of attacks. We also hope they will put a stop to it. That is, if the people of Andover truly believe in Diversity, Equity, and INCLUSION! ◊

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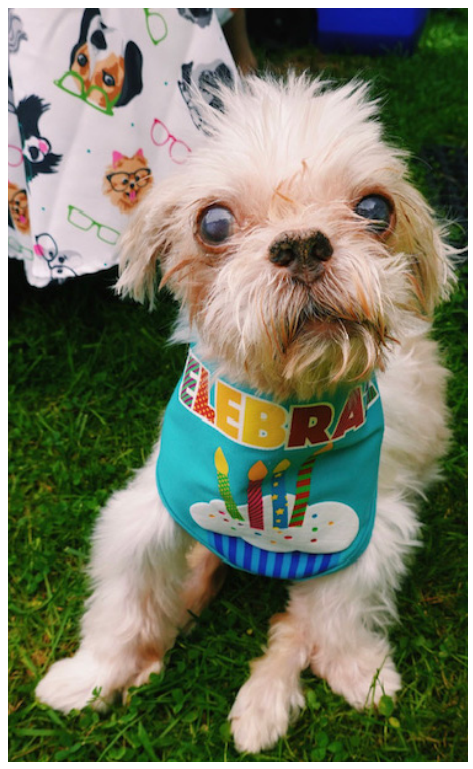
KANE'S KORNER

Vintage Pet Rescue

KANE
VALLEY PATRIOT MASCOT/COLUMNIST



In 2018 Alex Petrarca, Operations Manager of Vintage Pet Rescue fell in love with a senior dog named Franklin (pictured to the right) at a Vintage Pet Rescue fundraising event. Kane has heard of love at first sight but he asked to see a picture of Franklin since he had such a mesmerizing effect on Alex. Well Alex was right, Franklin rest his soul, was a very handsome senior in need of a good home. It seems in 2018 Alex and Franklin struck gold, when they found each other. Since laying eyes on Franklin, Alex worked in a volunteer capacity at the rescue and currently serves as the Operations Manager. Kane found Alex to be a very positive and enthusiastic interviewee.

Franklin's story of finding a loving home to live out his senior years speaks to the mission and passion of Vintage Pet Rescue. Often time. the rescue is the last resort for many senior dogs. Senior dogs are a very specialized niche group and the need is tremendous. Unfortunately seniors are frequently overlooked at shelters by potential adopters and in the southern high kill shelters, with limited space, are put to sleep. Animal shelters can also be scary and loud for senior dogs. Kane knows his local shelter has placed a couple of senior dogs at Vintage Pet Rescue because they were nervous being around the current larger and louder dogs. This made Kane sad to think many senior dogs were not awarded the opportunity to live out their older years on a comfortable couch with a loving family.

Vintage Pet Rescue is a 501C3non - profit founded by Kristen and Marc Peralta, who met in an animal shelter in 2013. (vintagepetrescue.org) They are committed to rescuing "vintage pets" from shelters and assisting owners who can no longer care for their pets. The animals in their care receive medical attention and love for the last months or years of their life. The rescue runs 100% on the generous donations of the community and the dedication of volunteers. Kane was amazed to learn about a retirement home for senior dogs. At times, the home has up to 30 residents waiting to be adopted. The rescue also has in their care special needs dogs. Kane remembers watching Joey, a special needs dog challenged with mobility issues, in the puppy bowl this year on his TV. Joey was a famous resident of the Vintage Pet Rescue family.

Kane learned that the rescue has nonstop requests for seniors that need placement and care. Originally the rescue was exclusively the cage free retirement home. As Vintage Pet Rescue grew, they expanded to a strong adoption network allowing the seniors to live out their golden years with a family. Every week new dogs come into the rescue including dogs on transports from Texas and Mississippi, local shelters, and private citizens unable to care for their senior pet. Alex explained that human senior citizens sometimes do not have options for pet care when they need to enter assisted care. Many facilities do not allow pets. Alex explained with pride that this is a population that Vintage Pet has been able to assist. Kane found this very touching.

Kane would encourage you to visit the Vintage Pet Rescue Website. Alex explained the rescue is regularly looking for adopters, and donations. As you can imagine senior pets have many medical needs. Donations can be made through the the website vintagepetrescue.org or Venmo at @vintagepetrescue.

Kane wishes all the pups at vintage pet rescue a happy retirement, good food, and a loving family. Thank you, Vintage Pet Rescue, for all you do!

Woof , Kane Peaslee, Columnist
Valley Patriot ◊

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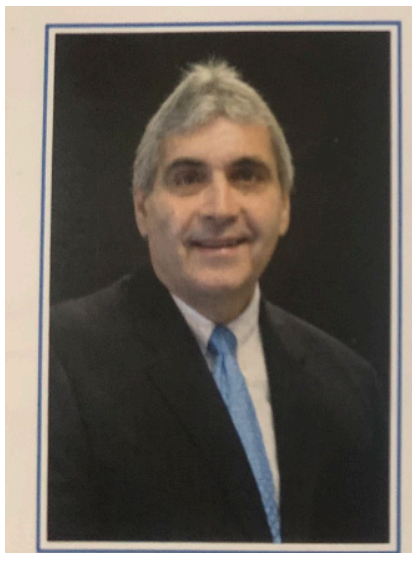
Former Republican N.H. congressional candidate Karoline Levitt made an appearance at the North Andover Spring Fling last month at the China Blossom. The North Andover Town Committee raised money for local scholarships at the event.

Sue Evans is from Carlisle, and drives all the way to Lawrence once a week to help at the TMF family dinner for the homeless. She was to receieve a Valley Patriot Scott Clegg Public Service Award at our annual BASH last month but could not attend because of a family emergency. So, TMF founder Michael Gorman presented the award to her at the TMF homeless dinner the following week. Sue was also chosen for this award for her work with homeless veterans.



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Royal House of Roast Beef Opens New Location in Dracut

DRACUT - Magdi Mikhael, owner of Royal House of Roast Beef in Methuen has opened a new shop in Dracut at 1489 Broadway Road.

Last month, they held their grand opening at their new location in Dracut, having hundreds of customers from around the valley fill the new Royal House with much more seating and space than the Methuen location.

Royal House has earned "Best Roast Beef in the Valley" several times by The Valley Patriot and even won the Valley Patriot's "Best Dish" award at the coveted Methuen Exchange Taste of Methuen several times over the years.

Magdi told The Valley Patriot that as a Dracut resident he has long hoped to open a new shop in town and thanked the Dracut Financial Growth for hosting the ribbon-cutting at their grand opening on April 6th.

Address: 1489 Broadway Rd, Dracut,
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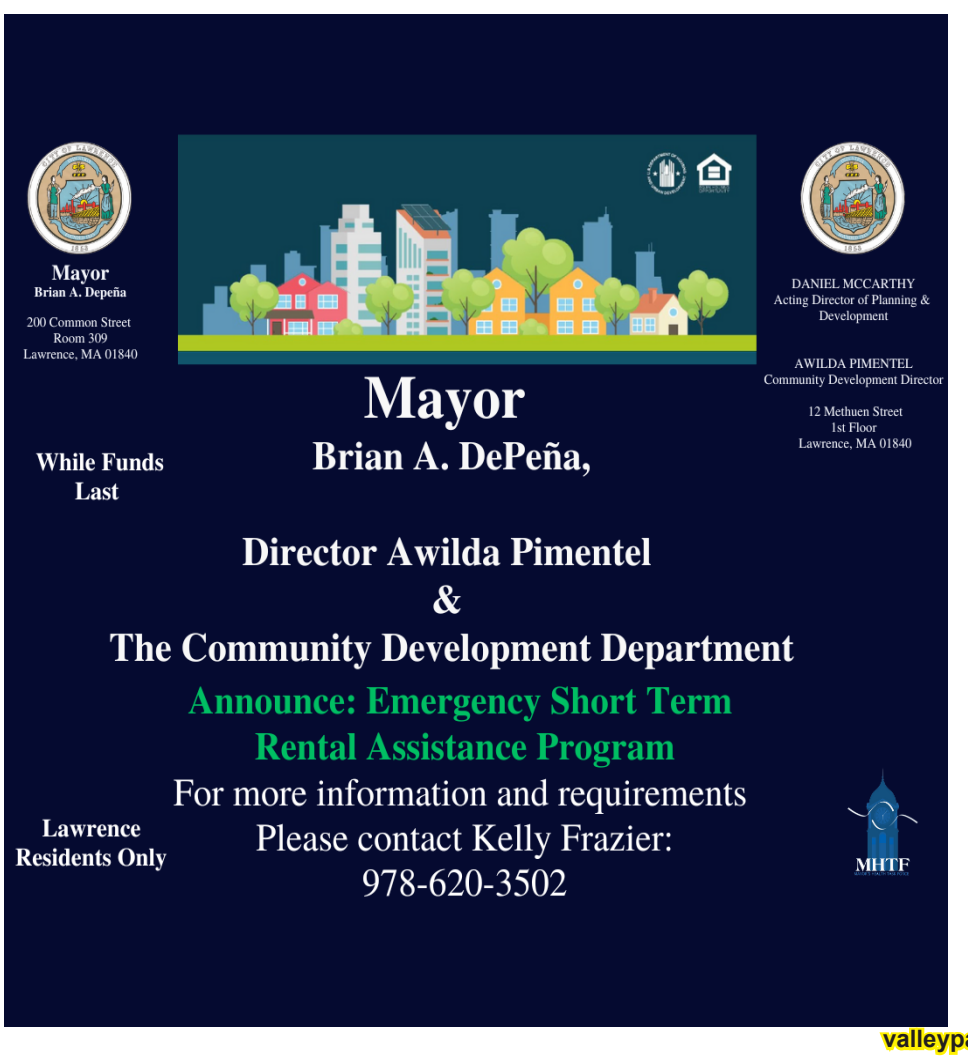
Email: RoyalHouseRoastBeef@gmail.com



EYE ON DRACUT

Zoning, Development & Maintaining Dracut's Rural Character

By Brian Genest
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

There's a lot of developments when it comes to development in Dracut. A bit of a building boom is about to begin and it hasn't gone unnoticed by the town or citizens. Officials and neighbors are trying to grapple with several development-related issues and concerns, including zoning bylaw changes, affordable housing, state mandates and infrastructure needs.

Right now, there are 12 housing developments in the planning stages in Dracut that are expected to bring about 900 new housing units to town. One of those projects is a 300-unit affordable housing development proposed for the site of the former Murphy Farm off Elizabeth Drive and Poppy Lane in East Dracut. That proposal calls for each of the 300 units to have 4 bedrooms, the potential for at least 1,200 people to be living in that housing development.

Town officials and neighborhood residents have expressed concerns about a variety of items related to the Murphy Farm project, especially public safety. Town Manager Ann Vandal told Selectmen the development will impact every aspect of town government due to its large size. And it's not the only one.

As the result of a statewide shortage of affordable housing, Dracut faces an unfunded state mandate to accommodate more than 1,200 additional housing units in town or lose major state grant funding. State legislators included that mandate in an economic development bill passed with the intention of providing affordable housing in communities near MBTA commuter rail stations.

To comply with the law, the town must create a new zoning district that allows for 15 housing units to be built per acre. Right now, the town has a one-acre requirement for single-family homes. By the end of 2024, the new zoning district must be approved by town meeting.

Like the Murphy Farm proposal, Vandal said the MBTA affordable housing plan will have impacts on every aspect of town government, ranging from schools and sewer services to public safety and recreation.

While Boston bureaucrats and lackwit legislators apparently prefer cement city over green pastures, Dracut has been working to balance growth and development with open space, preservation, and conservation. Town officials and residents aren't opposed to building affordable housing; the need is recognized, but so is the need for reasonable and responsible development that makes sense for the town and the desire to preserve our rural character.

It's frustrating--to say the least--that Dracut won't have much say about or local control of either affordable housing proposal, as most approval related to the construction will be done at the state level. The town's involvement will be mostly of oversight, excluding some local approval that may be required at the zoning board of appeals or conservation commission, for example, depending on the details and circumstances of the projects.

While the town and voters may not have significant input and influence on the affordable housing developments, there is something you can do when it comes to local zoning. In June, in addition to dealing with the annual town budget, Town Meeting voters will also consider 17 zoning articles. Those articles are part of an overhaul of the town's zoning bylaws, which haven't been substantially updated since the late 1980s. The proposed changes will impact future development, quality of life and the character of our town.

That's why it's so important to attend Town Meeting. This is your opportunity

to participate in shaping the future of our community and to have a say in decisions that will impact you, your family, and all of us.

When more of us are involved in the democratic process, Dracut is better off, especially when it comes to these types of important issues that will have long-term consequences. Make your voice heard and make your vote count. Come to Town Meeting on June 5th.

Brian Genest is the producer and host of Eye On Dracut, winner of the Hometown Media Award for News, sponsored by Lucky Oil. ◊

IN YOUR CORNER with AUDITOR DIZOGLIO

Auditor DiZoglio Finds Continued Deficiencies in Protecting Elders from Abuse and Neglect

Being a senior citizen in Massachusetts should be especially fulfilling, as our Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) operates with a core mission to "develop, implement, and evaluate innovative programs to promote the independence, empowerment, and well-being of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers."

Unfortunately, that mission hasn't always aligned with reality, to the detriment of our senior population.

My office recently completed and released an audit report of EOEA. This audit followed up on deficiencies found in a 2018 audit completed under the previous administration.

When completing this 2-year review, I was disappointed to find that EOEA had still not followed through on making the recommended improvements to support our elders – despite claiming otherwise.

Our most recent findings show they have not been performing monthly checks of the Adult Protective Services' system. This failure means EOEA is unable to ensure all incidents of alleged elder abuse are properly referred to District Attorneys' offices, as required by law.

Finally, our audit team found that EOEA did not update its internal control plan to account for impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on operations. This includes not always ensuring that employees who had access to COVID-19 funds completed cybersecurity awareness training.

Gaps in assessment and monitoring can put elders at risk of continued abuse. Just as bad, they create vulnerabilities that have the potential to undermine the entire system. It is unacceptable that elders have continued to be put at risk due to a lack of responsive action.

These lapses in oversight occurred under the Baker Administration.

It is my hope that the new administration takes observations, feedback, and recommendations from our audit report to help turn things around - so that our elders get the best possible services.

If you would like to read the full audit report, please visit: https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-the-state-auditor

As always, please feel free to contact my office at any time for more information at auditor@sao.state.ma.us and 617-727-2075.

Yours in service,
Diana ◊

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NEW ENGLAND CIGAR EXPO WINDHAM, N.H.

The New England Cigar Expo

WHEN: Friday & Saturday – SEPTEMBER 29 & 30, 2023

WHERE: Crossing Life Church/ Dreamers Ranch – Windham, New Hampshire

TICKETS: Visit your favorite Two Guys Location at 10am or call 888-224-4272 at 11am - 2pm est.

Tickets will sell fast! Do not wait because you may miss out.

Two Guys Smoke Shop has been presenting annual cigar dinner events celebrating their anniversary since they first started back in 1985.

On Friday September 29, 2023, beginning at 6pm, The New England Cigar Expo's Opening Night Cigar Dinner begins... Roast prime rib dinner will be served, live music, comedy, and a game show event where someone will win an 800-pound cow.

No, you won't be handed the rope attached to a cow, but a new 16 cubic foot freezer with fresh, flash frozen, butchered meat which will yield about 24 Roasts, 28 T-Bones, 10 Sirloin Steaks, 10 Sirloin Tip Steaks, 28 Rib Eye Steaks, 6 Round Steaks, and over 150 pounds of ground beef. There will also be Short Ribs, Flank Steak, Stew Meat and Brisket. WAIT – But that's Not all!

On Saturday September 30th, Day 2 of the New England Cigar Expo begins at 11am with a Meet & Greet with the biggest names in the Cigar Industry, a live broadcast at 12 noon of The Cigar Authority Podcast, live music, comedy, a food truck pavilion with some of the best local food trucks around and cocktails available.

Wrapping up the event at 4pm on Saturday will be a LIVE Micro-Wrestling show, yes (little people wrestling) with play by play announcing by some great comedians. "I think this is going to be a lot of fun and talked about for years to come" said Garofalo, "this will be our first attempt at a 2-day experience, but I expect non-stop enjoyment throughout the two-day Expo. Getting cigar smokers together to enjoy premium cigars is always a great time."

For those who are lucky enough to score the very limited VIP tickets we will all head out for a VIP After Party immediately following the events on day two!

UNION FILED FEDERAL CHARGES AGAINST NORTHEASTERN FOR USE OF POLICE TO THREATEN AND INTIMIDATE

The Graduate Employees of Northeastern University – UAW (GENU-UAW) have filed an unfair labor practice charge (ULP) with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) alleging illegal retaliation and attempts to intimidate graduate worker union organizers, highlighting the university's continued acts of disrespect and coercion. Graduate worker union organizers have reported police showing up in their workplace to interrogate them about their participation in a union action, a clear violation of their rights to participate in a union free of retaliation and intimidation. The charge includes a request for an order against the University to stop abusing their police power.

"After participating in a chalking activity, I was shocked to have armed officers show up at my lab desk without notice to threaten me with false charges," said Niki Thomas, a fifth-year graduate worker at Northeastern University in the Bioengineering program. "This university continues to obstruct us, first by fighting our right to organize, and now retaliating against me for helping form our union. This is exactly why we need a union, to protect us from the discriminatory actions of this administration. They are even willing to violate federal law and try to terrorize me and my colleagues out of organizing. We deserve better."

GENU-UAW filed for a union election on February 6th of this year, but the University refused to agree to an election and has instead chosen to fight against all graduate workers' right to organize, claiming the NLRB's landmark 2016 Columbia decision, which restored student workers' right to organize a union, was "wrongly decided". The graduate workers were forced to hold a hearing defending their right to a union and are currently awaiting a decision from the NLRB Regional Director.

SPRING CONCERTS IPSWICH

Sunday, May 21st, 2PM and 4PM

Dolan Performing Arts Center, 130 High St., Ipswich, MA - Free Admission

The Northeast Massachusetts Youth Orchestras present their Afternoon of Spring Concerts on Sunday, May 21, 2023, at the Dolan Performing Arts Center, 130 High Street, in Ipswich, MA. There will be two performances; a concert at 2:00 pm and a second concert at 4:00 pm. The concerts are free, and no tickets are required.

The 2:00 pm concert includes NMYO's Prelude and Overture String Ensembles and the Intermezzo Orchestra featuring works by Gustav Mahler, Georges Bizet, Reynard Burns, and others.

The 4:00 pm concert features NMYO's advanced ensembles that are the Wind Ensemble, Select Flute Choir, and Symphony Orchestra. The program is a mix of classical and contemporary music with compositions by Frank Ticheli, Otto Nicolai, Johann Strauss, and more.

Sponsored in part by the Ipswich Cultural Council, NMYO concerts are a great way to experience orchestral music while supporting the musical training of the area's finest young musicians. NMYO is committed to making its concerts accessible to all patrons and will make reasonable accommodations when possible. For assistance contact the NMYO office.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council, Institution of Savings Charitable Foundation, Carriage House Violins of Johnson Stringed Instruments, Cape Ann Savings Bank, Coburn Charitable Society, Cummings Center, Demoulas Foundation, ECCF's Creative County Initiative, and New England Biolabs are NMYO Season Sponsors. The Boxford and Topsfield Cultural Councils, along with a host of local businesses, also lend their support.

NMYO provides youth musicians with exceptional ensemble training and opportunities for cognitive, social, and personal growth through musical performance and community service. Led by Music Director Gerald J. Dolan Jr., with an accomplished team of music professionals, NMYO's 145 musicians come from 35+ towns throughout northeast Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire and participate in one of six ensembles offered by the program this year. The regular rehearsal and concert schedule is supplemented with master classes, enrichment days, chamber music coaching, and outreach concerts to underserved populations. Your child can join NMYO! Auditions for the 2023-2024 concert season take place Saturday, June 10. Rehearsals are held weekly just off I-95 and Route 1 in Topsfield/Boxford. NMYO is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. LEARN MORE – nmyo.org · info@nmyo.org · 978-309-9833

EDITORS please note: Photographs are attached. Photo credit, Kathy Joyce. If you would like an interview with NMYO Music Director, Gerald Dolan, please contact NMYO through Terri Murphy at terri.murphy@nmyo.org or call (978) 309-9833.

SUPPORT MA SENATE BILL S. 1131

A bill has been filed to stop attorneys from being able to legally lie in court. Right now attorneys are able to lie in court and suffer no consequences.

To support the bill contact the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on Beacon Hill 'An Act to strengthen rules governing attorney conduct; penalties for misconduct.'

Call the Joint Committee on the Judiciary: Senate (617) 722-1120 and the House (617) 722-2396.

Twelve states already have laws that do not give absolute immunity to attorneys who commit judicial misconduct – these 12 states protect the people/litigants from opposing attorneys who lie to judges, conceal relevant evidence, engage in fraudulent misconduct; this means the attorney(s) "committed fraud on the court" during a judicial proceeding.

Senate Bill S.1131 is modeled after those laws using the current laws in the following 12 states: Arkansas, California, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming.◊

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

Lawrence Mayor Brian DePena behind the wheel of a jet at the Lawrence airport during his tour and meeting with Airport Director Francisco Urena.

WINSTON SAYS!

Estela Reyes is a GREAT Representative!

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The New Owners of Borrelli's Deli in Methuen also own STACKS in Haverhill which opened in 2021.

BORRELLI'S: FROM PAGE 5

STACKS IN HAVERHILL

In Haverhill, we own 'Stacks'; it's the old Lasting room," Jim Tomaccio said. "Our son Anthony owns 'Loaded' which is right behind it."

"He does some crazy stuff there. Korean dogs and loaded fries and it's top notch. 'Stacks' is a restaurant and bar we have 24 taps, boozy shakes with and without alcohol. We have a 26 foot by 46-foot deck out back, and we are doing the final install now on a permanent awning.

Paul added that 'Stacks' offers great pub food. "We've got smash burgers, fried chicken sandwiches, appetizers. We are working on Nacho's."

"My first restaurant was a burrito place called Stuffed. They had such a huge following. Eventually we closed down to do other things and it's worked out well for us."

"My first job was actually at Borrelli's about 14 years ago."

PAR 28 in SALEM NH

"We also have a place in Salem NH called Par 28," Jim said.

"It's in the old Coca Cola building. We have coal fired pizza and all the fixing that go along with it. We have a 34-seat bar, seven golf simulators and we have eight axe throwing bays. It's a family business, so my son Joe and Jimmy are also involved in our endeavors."

"We also own a pharmacy off exit 2 and we do specialty compounding, and ship all over the U.S. We also have a medical currier company. We were instrumental in COVID and vaccine deliveries, we do nuclear, fertility and a whole host of medical supplies."

When asked how they started in business Paul said they started out selling sausages at various fairs throughout the state.

"We would go and sell our sausage subs, and that business has been around since 1953. That's how we got into the sausage business. We pulled out of that and then when I opened my business Stuffed, that's what proved to the family that we could really do this. Then we took on a larger endeavor with Stacks, and then even bigger with Par 28. So, it just kept growing to the point where we now have Borrelli's!

"We are elbows deep into the business," Jim added. "The whole family is partaking in all these endeavors."

"We don't just hire people and have them run it. Every business we have, has our family touch on it." ◊

On his last day as owner of Borrelli's Deli, Don Smeriglio was presented with a proclamation from State Representative Estela Reyes for his years of service to the community and his food donations for the homeless in Lawrence.

Don Smeriglio Says Good Bye to Borrelli's

Just a week after Don Smeriglio announced that he was selling Borrelli's Deli to the Tomaccio family, both Smeriglio and the Tomaccio's appeared on the Paying Attention Podcast to talk about the turnover. We asked Don how he got into the business. Here's what he said.

"I purchased the original Borrelli's in 1993. I'm a chef by trade," he said.

"I went to the vocational school and studied culinary arts. I went on to the Culinary Institute of America, worked the circuit; country clubs, yacht clubs, hotels. I graduated in '73 from high school, in '75 from college and after all that, I was just tired of working for other people."

"So, I was working at Boston University at the time, and I read in the Sunday newspaper about a small local Italian Deli for sale. I called them, went and looked at it, and I was sold, the rest is history."

"When I took over, it was right next to Piro's Bakery. It was only 1,100 square feet. We had an eight-foot refrigerated deli case, sausage, mortadella, salami, prosciutto, a couple of cheeses and that's it. Then we started doing sandwiches, like 5 or 6 a day. Eventually it got up to ten or twelve a day, now we serve two or three hundred a day."

"I started with my niece Donna and my good friend Steve. It was just the three of us running the business and it kept growing. As space became available, we expanded, doubled our space, and shortly thereafter we ran out of space again."

Smeriglio ended up buying Mama Mary's restaurant and moving Borrelli's to that location.

Asked what he plans to do now that he is officially retired.

"I love the beach and I love the ocean, so that IS the plan. We have a little place up in Wells, but that's not really in the plan right now. I've never had a summer to myself. I really don't want to do anything for about six months to a year. Italy is really the first trip we have planned, but hopefully there's many more to come."

"I love to play golf, I like to fish, so I'm not the least bit worried about filling my time or what I'm going to do in retirement. I'm just going to try and enjoy it. I know I'm leaving Borrelli's in good hands. The Tomaccio family has been wonderful and it truly is a family that's involved. My staff has been fabulous, a lot of them have been with me for 15 or 20 years and they are nervous. But, I keep telling them, 'don't worry, you are in good hands'."

Asked if he plans on moving out of Methuen in retirement, Don said he will live in Methuen forever.

During the interview, Paying Attention! Podcast host Tom Duggan presented a proclamation from State Auditor Diana DiZoglio to Don for his years of service to the community. ◊

MENTAL HEALTH: FROM 5

to provide mental health services to young people. They often have longstanding relationships with their students and are familiar with their school environments. By expanding licensure opportunities for school counselors, we can leverage their existing relationships and expertise to provide better mental health care to young people across the state. This is especially important, given that many behavioral health clinics and hospitals are facing long waiting lists for appointments, leaving many patients without the care they need.

Overall, Senate Bill 210 represents a critical step towards increasing access to mental health services in our state. By addressing the shortage of qualified providers, we can help to ensure that every individual who needs mental health care is able to receive it, regardless of their background or circumstances. As your State Senator, I will continue to advocate for policies and initiatives that promote mental health and wellbeing for all residents in our state.

State Senator Pavel Payano

1st Essex District (Haverhill, Lawrence & Methuen) ◊

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Weather 101 with Al Kaprielian

The First Full Month of Spring

Welcome to May and the first full month of the spring season. During May the sun angle continues to get higher in the sky resulting in warmer temperatures as we go through the month.

Also, during May, the amount of daylight also increases along with sunsets after 8PM. May is the month where leaves return back to the trees and flowers start to bloom. A negative to the month of May is tree pollen. Tree pollen is highest when there are dry days due to the lack of rain.

When rain occurs the pollen levels decrease due to the rain washing the pollen out. During early and mid May chilly nights can still occur especially north and west of Boston as a result of this its best to leave plants inside and make your garden toward the latter part of the month. During May grass on the lawns starts growing again even more so after a heavy rain occurs.

As a result, it is the time of year for using lawnmowers again. Snow can occur in May; it's rare but not impossible.

A late season snowstorm occurred back in May of 1977. Many areas got over 10 inches of snow. Due to the time of year, the snow was heavy and pasty containing a lot of water. This heavy pasty snow added weight to trees and power lines causing them to break and fall.

This resulted in numerous and widespread power outages. With the higher sun angle in May the snow was all gone in just a matter of days. The most difficult tasks were restoring power and cleaning up debris from the snowstorm. In contrast hot weather can occur in May with high temperatures in the 80s and even 90 degrees plus.

Recapping April, it was another warmer than normal month. Boston averaged 2.2 degrees above normal in April. Total rainfall for Boston in April was 3.10" this was minus .53 inches below normal. Most of the rainfall in Boston during April fell on the 29th and 30th. Some areas in Massachusetts saw between 3.50" to 4".

Heavy rain also fell in northern New England due to the potent low-pressure system.

Major flooding occurred up in Conway, New Hampshire from the heavy rain of April 29th and 30th. Heavy rain and strong winds occurred in Maine where many areas had power outages. Prior to the late April rainstorm many areas in New England had dry conditions so the late April storm helped a lot with the rainfall deficit.

During April we had a few days of hot summerlike weather. On April 13thand 14th high temperatures reached the upper 80s and low 90s. On April 13th Boston reached 88 degrees which was a new record high temperature.

On April 14 Hartford, Connecticut reached 96 degrees. Also, some areas west of Worcester, like Westfield, went into the mid 90s on April 14th. These hot temperatures were more likely to occur in July and August, not in April. As a result of these hot temperatures many people wore tee shirts and shorts. This hot weather was short lived as a cold front came through Friday evening bringing an end to this unusual hot weather. Areas other than Boston also broke old record high temperatures. The reason for this very hot weather which occurred was a very strong area of upper-level high pressure off the east coast.

This high pressure known as the Bermuda High pushed the jet stream far to the north of New England. This put our area to the south of the jet stream which is the warmer side. Due to the strength of the upper-level high pressure system the air was very hot south of the jet stream track. Towards the latter part of April, we saw another change in the jet stream as it developed into an Omega block. The reason for the term Omega block is that the jet stream makes the configuration of the Greek symbol Omega.

When this occurs weather systems high and low pressure slow down or can even stall in a given location. Relate the Omega block to a traffic jam on the highway.

Weather usually moves from west to east. When an Omega block forms weather can retrograde and move from east to west.

The Omega block is common in the spring as the atmosphere transitions from winter to spring. During the last part of April, we had cool temperatures along with the rain storm the last two days of the month. The reason for the cool end to April was we were in the part of the Omega Block where the jet stream went well to our south. This occurred in the troughing part of the jet stream.

Example picture the letter u which represents the troughing or area of low pressure. Being in the

troughing part of the Omega Block caused the jet stream to track south of our region putting us on the north (cool) side of the jet stream. The ridging in the Omega Block example upside down u represents an area of high pressure. From this

you can see that depending on where your area is located under the Omega Block will dictate what weather you get (sunny & warm versus cloudy chilly & wet). Will this block break down in May and if it does when? Will there be any hot weather this May, any snow? Will there be a lot of rain? Stay tuned to next month's article for the answers. In the meantime, enjoy the spring season! ◊

Property Sales, Foreclosures for APRIL, 2023 in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover. (All properties are listed in order; seller, buyer, price, address.)

Northern Essex Registry of Deeds
M. Paul Iannuccillo, Register

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
of Massachusetts

ANDOVER

Karen A Spieler Revocable Trust-2009 & Karen A & David A Spieler Trs, Osman Berk Usta & Amina Abbadi, $990,000, 15 Forest Hill Dr

Samuel Edwin Robert & Catherine Lamb Carpenter Smith, Dongeum Kim Lopresti & Samuel Traxler Lopresti, $795,000, 58 Red Spring Rd

Arthur S & Diane F Fulman, George W & Ingrid L Ousler III, $266,000, 12 Longwood Dr Unit 2

Diana L Mears & Robert A Stephens, Susan T Pulido & Robert W Lafreniere, $780,000, 3 Amherst Rd

Dona M & Edward J Cady, L & X Realty Group LLC, $261,500, 20 Colonial Dr Unit 20-6

Andrew Kean Bressette & Cassidy-Rose Bressette, Ahmad Usmani & Noor Tahirkheli, $740,000, 163 High Plain Rd

Kindred Homes Inc, Katherine M Walbam-Churchill & Thomas P Churchill, $1,625,000, 100 Central St

Kyle & Kathleen Teixeira, MD K Sarder, $300,000, 14 Longwood Dr Unit 2

Delia R Day, Linda McGovern, $285,000, 4 Colonial Dr Unit B4-7

Thomas Duffy, SSMK LLC, $500,000, 97 Lovejoy Rd

Jose Arnaldo Almeida Vieira & Cecilia Wong Vieira, Huiqi Gan & Huanghui Zeng, $1,540,000, 4 Newman Hill Dr

Luke D & Carla Ursino Kimball, John Drake, $50,450, Granli Dr

John Piazza Tr & Piazza Irrevocable Family Trust, Timothy P & Lisa Marie Daniel, $1,225,000, 33 Kirkland Dr

Richard P Quintal & Patricia M Quintal Trs & CQ Realty Trust, Kerry & Marc Crowley , $1,075,000, 25 Strawberry Hill Rd

Riverdale Construction LLC, Abdollah Ghanbari, $847,000, 4 Samos Ln

Richard P & Karen A Geraci, Macos Jacome & Mercedes Perez, $840,000, 20 North St

Stephen Kazanjian , Constitution Properties LLC, $175,000, B5-9 Colonial Dr

Casey A Farley & Charles Leon Davidson Est /Charles L Davidson Est, 125-127 Main Street Andover LLC, $2,000,000, 123 1/2 & 125-127 Main St

Yvone Cormier Tr & CA Investment Trust , Ana L Daher, $1,300,000, 6 Robert Dr Unit 2-3

Mark M Pawlik Tr & 12 George Street Realty Trust, Brian Martin & Susanna Lauren Amber Leima, $680,000, 12 George St

LAWRENCE

Robert M Minasian Tr & Heigel Realty Trust, Leonardo Antonio Gonzalez, $825,000, 18 Winthrop Ave

Juan Orlando Lopez, Massiel Altagracia Lopez & Maria Altagracia Paulino, $725,000, 45-47 Exchange St

Luisa Polanco Tr & 30-32 Alma Street Realty Trust , Stanley Chi-Wing Chan, $499,999, 30-32 Alma St Unit 32

Twenty Border Street LLC, Deishawn & Yvette Thompson, $450,000, 22 Border St Unit 22

Roger A Farah, F R Landscaping Paving & Snow Removal Inc, $249,900, 80 Manchester St

Daniel Ortega, Marisol Y Jorge Deseverino & Junior Serverino Corona, $740,000, 36-38 Atkinson St

Jameel Charles-Balan, Claudette Pelissier, $525,000, 57 Cedar St

Bay State Green Solutions LLC, Ramon Nunez & Idamis Ortiz, $360,000, 111 Cambridge St Unit B

RJJM LLC, Tannice Lindsay Doyle & Khairai M Doyle, $776,000, 220 Carleton St

Alcadio Gil Flores, Pamela Cofresi & Leonel De La Rosa Baez, $335,000, 42 Exchange St

WF Master Reo II LLC, Mario A Cavez & Fidel S Munoz Arrivillaga, $290,000, 6 Rhine St

Frandy B & Janiris Matos, David DeLeon & Maria E Torres, $235,000, 312 Water St Unit 19

RLJB LLC, Britos Management LLC, $600,000, 132-134 South Broadway

Pedro Velasquez, Josephine B Leo, $170,000, Rhine St

La Belle Maison LLC, VJD+12 LLC, $934,000, 439-443 Riverside Dr

Daniel Ortega, Josue Garcia, $800,000, 31-33 Bourque St

Pedro & Alejandrina Velazquez, Dario A Pena & Santa Andrea Soto Villar & Santa Y Pena, $650,000, 33-35 Rhine St

Harry Checo, Angelidi Monegro, $142,000, 11 Lawrence St Unit 607

Francisco N & DeSilva & Manuela Silva, Yordin Orozco-Fuentes, $652,000, 570 Haverhill St

Nasim Ghazi Tr & Mohammed Saleem Tr & 60 Addison Street Realty Trust, Johanny Gomez, $110,000, 46 Amesbury St Unit 2B

Twenty Border Street LLC, Eder M Rameau, $460,000, 18 Border St Unit 18

Humm Realty LLC, Oliver C Ortiz Alfonso, $235,000, 272 East Haverhill St Unit 7

Jelinson Gonzales, German Gonzales & Zenaida Rivas, $850,000, 12-14A Rowe St

Vivian Nunez, Bay Flow LLC, $291,495, 80 Groton St

Rebecca Estevez, Thom Kris Ozoria Reynoso & Aracelis Morel, $285,000, 2 Greenwood St Unit 152

Chelsey Fosdick & William Kolbe III, William Kolbe III, $123,417, 6 Cleveland St

Carl W Berger & Florence J Hood Est, Colvin Wang, $650,000, 3 Durso Ave

Twenty Border Street LLC, Yair M Rojas & Adela Stephanie Collado, $463,000, 16 Border St Unit 16

Theodore R Michaud, Samuel A Orellana Alfaro, $391,000, 84 Howard St

Mario Landry & Linda Landry & Nancy Landry & Carole Dellechiaie & Marise Grasso , Carmen Ojeda & Manuel A Matos Rivera, $455,000, 10 N Boylston St.

METHUEN

Alexis N Karlin/Alexis & Justin Crawford, Domenic & Kaleigh Dicato, $470,000, 19 Wallace St

Scott W Decourcy, Maria Virgen Maria & Domingo D Batista Paulino, $450,000, 5 Huse Rd

Donald A Towler Tr & Towler Realty Trust, Kim I Kowal, $173,000, 45 Christopher Dr Unit 101

N & J Properties LLC, Eusebia Gardenas & Felix S Fernandez & Jennifer Cristal Paula Geronimo, $660,000, 25 Piedmont St

Babak Sardashti, Methuen Council 4027 Knights of Columbus Inc, $425,000, 19 Ayers Village Rd

Toll MA Land III LP, Janice Dollive, $1,026,712, 62 Phoebe St Unit 90

Toll MA Land III LP, John J & Kathleen Coffey, $951,011, 64 Phoebe St Unit 89

Nicole S & Brian D Labranche, Vilma Galdamez & Jose Lopez, $489,000, 21 Lantern Ln

Julia A Lantigua, Edward C Leone Bencosme, $740,000, 8-10 Lawrence St

Amimc LLC, Matej Zampach & Caeli Constance Tegan Zampach, $730,000, 150 Pleasant St, 21 Royal Dr

Patrick A & Patricia F Hoey, Jennifer L & Christopher J McDonald, $715,000, 188 Old Ferry Dr

Mischa R McFarland, Saim Irshad Rana & Prena Sharma, $591,000, 23 Shirley Ave

David A DelPozzo & Alfred R DelPozzo Est, Kimball Lawrence St LLC, $380,000, 1 Rosewood Rd

Derek Hebbelinck & Alison K Hebbelinck Est, Gil E Caraballo & Patricia Rosario, $570,000, 8 Rambler Rd

Frank A & Jaime P Tine , Michael R & Anne L Barrett, $555,000, 74 Dracut St

Matthew & Pamela Giantonio/Pamela L Patenaude, Craig J & Nancy M Celli & Diane P Carreiro & Jose Da Silva & Stella Silva, $402,000, 45 Washington St Unit D-17

Lisa M & Robert P Colloca, Carlos Julio Polanco, $315,000, 20 Washington St Unit 56

Timothy D Murchison, Maria F Mercado, $266,000, 21 Hampshire Rd Unit 113

William T & Tonilyn A Frederick, Rebecca M Squires, $605,000, 1 Autum Ln

John A Cronin Jr & Judith L Cronin Trs & Cronin Family Trust, Adonis R Gonzalez, $475,000, 33 Richard Ave

Walter F & Linda A Lyons, Raquel Flores, $415,000, 30 Colgate Ave Unit 1

Linda A Bonanno-Vitale & Brian J Vitale & Melissa A Greco-Vitale, Clement J Bonanno Jr & Deanna Milone-Bonanno, $373,000, 66A Bonanno Ct

Toll Ma Land III LP, Neil & Beth Cherry Trs & Neil Cherry & Beth Cherry Family Trust, $851,445, 27 Cardinal Rd Unit 168

Toll MA Land III LP, Edward A Lawlor Jr Tr & Pamela J Lawlor Tr & Lawlor 29 Trust, $713,273, 25 Cardinal Rd Unit 169

SS-LBMA LLC, Jr Builders Inc, $615,000, 218 Hampshire Rd

Xin Zeng, Ying Li, $400,000, 10 James Rd

Vasiliki Teahan Tr & Tayetus Realty Trust, Vincent J Grasso & David Holland, $390,000, 11-13 Brown St

Cindy R Khoury Tr & Unit #77-Q Stone Cleave Village Condominium Realty Trust, Donna Jones, $370,000, 20 Washington St Unit 77

Susan M Nicholson, Kathryn McDaid, $645,000, 17 Hampstead St Unit 1

Madeline N M Muteba , Christine Rosano, $450,000, 39 Louise Ave

Richard Lister & Deborah Lister Est/Deborah Ann Lister Est, Hans J Schwartz & Patricia Dos Santos Queiroz, $425,000, 8 Noyes St

Timothy J & Gina M Lannan, G Trenton Realty LLC, $60,000, 22 Brayton St

Donald Smeriglio Tr & Smeriglio Realty Trust, Tomacchio Realty LLC, $1,100,000, 322 Merrimack St

Gaetano Bruno & Lucia Rosa BrunoTr & Gaetano Bruno 2023 Irrevocable Trust, Loren K Valdez Arias & Marcos E Santana Moreno, $650,000, 61 Dexter St

Oscar & Lajja Lantigua, Julia A Lantigua, $500,000, 94 Swan St

U S Bank Trust Co Tr, Daher Group Inc, $337,000, 2 Grove St

Dennis A Calderone & Paula May Casey, Marcelina Zorilla, $236,000, 395 Merrimack St Unit 47

Marek S & Elzbieta Skrzypek, Courtney J DiGaetano & Dorothy E Harding, $580,000, 17 Alderbrook Ln

JM Brothers LLC, Vikneswaran Doraisamy & Santa Krissna Balakrishnan, $480,000, 38 Landing Dr Unit 38

Tracy P Sprance & Cynthia L Sprance Trs & Tracy P Sprance & Cynthia L Sprance Revocable Trust, Kosta & Virginia Kay Gregory, $689,000, 11 Athens Wy

Rebecca Osborn Lewis , Domingo Jimenez, $470,000, 10 Baremeadow St

Clark & Cleveland LLC, Moni Alex Dos, $960,000, 44-44A Oakland Ave

Coventry Development Inc, Steven & Debra Savoy, $935,896, 189 Old Ferry Dr

Steven & Debra Savoy, Troy & Jessica Morrell, $787,800, 12 Phoebe St Unit 139

Israel Rivera, Luis C Ramirez & Yesica Beltre De Ramirez, $753,000, 1-3 King St

Anny M & Roberto Irizarry, Teresa Metz & Jose Vladimir Acosta, $735,000, 135-137 Swan St

Ryan & Korinne L Traynor & Korinne L Ghafari, Aaron & Elisabeth Mansfield, $600,000, 42 Olive Ave

Alex N Dominguez & Alba R Nunez Dominguez, Roberto & Anny Mariel Irizarry, $560,000, 77 North Lowell St

Diane D Dalphond, Robert Patrick Neary Jr & Jessalyn DeFranzo, $470,000, 40 Rossi St

Arthur L Hardy III & Estate of Roger F Hardy Sr Est/ Roger F Hardy Est, Bryan Ferrer Frias & Noris Frias, $325,000, 29 Kenwood Rd

KT Construction LLC, One Centennial LLC, $300,000, Hampshire Rd

NORTH ANDOVER

Richard & Shelia Aghoian Trs & Richard Aghoian Revocable Living Trust & Sheila Aghoian Revocable Living Trust, Limin Kong & Hang Zhao , $1,850,000, 47 Bonny Ln

Prakash Realty LLC, 575 Turnpike Realty LLC, $237,500, 575 Turnpike St Unit 27

Winter Realty Trust & Reinhold L & Lynda M Winter Trs, Michael Brice Nadler & Taylor Cordrey Nadler, $935,000, 459 Salem St

Michael B & Taylor C Nadler, Molly N Behan & Brian J McManus, $675,101, 373 Salem St.

REAL ESTATE: PAGE 23

HERO: FROM PAGE 1

the US Army, and trained and formed up, with the 128th Anti-Aircraft Battalion in El Paso, Texas in June of 1943. Each of these units during World War II had four batteries of 90mm anti-aircraft artillery; two batteries of 155 mm "Long Tom" seacoast artillery; 40mm, 20mm and 50 caliber weapons designed as both anti-tank and anti-air artillery. In addition, teams that manned and operated fire control apparatus, transport, and support units each battalion comprised about 1,300 men. Boot's unit landed in an LST at Omaha Beach on D-Day +5, on June 11, 1944. The battalion would go on to earn five Battle Stars fighting in the European Theater during World War II.

One of the stories he told me, was going to a farmhouse looking to obtain fresh food, and meeting an American woman, living there, who was married to a German national, and provided him with fresh eggs and vegetables. Another was of a German officer wishing to surrender to the Americans, rather than the French or the Russians, with his ninety German soldiers. The officer, wanted to surrender to an American officer equal or greater rank, but soon realized surrendering to an American of lesser rank, was far better than being captured by the French or the Russians. The Germans had occupied much of France and Russia during the war and were not as gracious as the Americans or British during surrender.

The 2014 film "Monuments Men" was about the looting of artwork and valuables by the German army in the occupied countries. Towards the end of his service in Europe, Boots guarded one of the caves containing some of the looted artwork. He and his comrades entered the cave one night, finding crates of brand-new German Air Force jackets, Boots helped himself to one. He brought it home from the war and gave it to a friend who needed a warm coat. During the war, he met General Patton in England, and was in Lidz, Austria when Germany surrendered.

Boots was a four-year starting lineman on both offense and defense for the Boston College football team and in his senior year he was invited to attend the Green Bay Packers camp but declined. He married Barbara Pow of Salisbury, Massachusetts and the couple had four sons, Robert, Dana, Daniel and Steven and a daughter, Mary Ann. Steven was killed in an automobile accident as a young man. They have nine grandchildren, many great grandchildren. After service in the US Army, playing football for Boston College, he spent his working life as an educator. He was a swimming instructor and served as the Chief lifeguard for fifteen years at Salisbury Beach. He now divides his time between Florida and his wife's family home in Salisbury. Children and grandchildren live nearby and visit often. Boots will turn 100 years old in December of this year. Soldier, football player, educator, husband, father and grandfather, a member of our Greatest Generation, is truly "a Hero in our Midst"!

The Valley Patriot would like to thank the "all Lawrence" team that helped research and write this article, Michael Bourque, Ron Guilmette, and David Fabrizio. Their assistance was invaluable.

The Dracut American Legion asks all World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans, to call (603) 518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC! Veterans of all eras are asked to go the American Legion's Web site www.legion.org, and join the American Legion, our mission is working with Congress, Veterans, and the Community, preserving our Veteran's Benefits for future generations and serving all Veterans and their families.

John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the US Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 26 years. If you know a World War II, Korean War, or Vietnam War Veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com ◊

PHOTO: ANGEL GARCIA

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SUSAN'S BOOK REVIEW

Doctor Know

SUE PIAZZA
VALLEY PATRIOT BOOK COLUMNIST

© 2023 by Mel Walker
This was an Advance Readers Copy
Genre: Fiction
Bookmarkers: 5.0

Written in the first person this multi-racial book has heart as well as drama, Mel walker is the only male writer I've read that captures the feelings of a woman accurately.

Rising Baltimore Hospital star Dr. Cynthia Haywood is at the height of her professional life as a respected neurosurgeon. She's spent the last four years working to reach the level of assistant chair. Suddenly fate throws her a curve ball. While saving someone else's life, her sister loses hers. Dr. Haywood must make the trip to a small town in Rhode Island to help care for the adopted daughter left behind.

Unaware of how to parent an eight-year-old girl brings challenges as does the new hospital she's taken a temporary job at. The one thing that helps her maintain her sanity is the next-door neighbor, the self-professed "Hot neighbor", Simon Baxter. He becomes her knight in shining armor, a man only a book could create. He gives her life balance-and meaning.

Dr. Haywood, previously focused on her career, must decide if a quieter, family life, in RI with a man too good to be true is her destiny. Or, is the life she worked years to perfect in Baltimore, the place the rest of her family lives, the place where she belongs.

Many books use events, drama, to propel their characters and storyline as does this one but Mr. Walker's books add a different dimension, they are character driven. We are given insight into the day-to-day thoughts and feelings of Cynthis Haywood. The events that happen in the protagonist's life are believable. They are situations many of us have found ourselves in.

A lot of dialogue is internal. It is the inner workings of Dr. Haywood's mind. She describes events, people, conflicts, etc. We learn about the world she inhabits through her self-dialogue. The book does not suffer for this but is rather enhanced by this method of storytelling.

The plot takes us, as well as Dr. Haywood, on a journey of self-discovery. And with the likeable and believable characters we are more than happy to go on this journey with them.

The sentence length and words chosen flow freely. They kept me engaged. Mr. Walker's doesn't try to impress with his word knowledge. He doesn't add large words that one has to look up, he keeps his story real. Real people, real situations, real everyday conflicts, everyday decisions. The author slowly spins a tale that, as areader, you enjoy following.

I laughed, I cried, I spent sleepless nights not being able to put this book down.

I recommend this book.

Susan Piazza, a Navy veteran, is an author, columnist, and blogger. Book One, A Bird Call That Isn't, In her historical Ongoing Indigenous Tale series can be found on Amazon at:

A Bird Call That Isn't : https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0829MHLRX

Her new book Destiny's Daughter, the second book in the series, will be out June 2023

THE DOCTOR IS IN!

Obesity

Dr. Pierre Ghassibi
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Obesity disturbs the hormonal system of the body. Hormones go everywhere and therefore the effect is everywhere. We see more:

Depression, clumsiness, migraines, diabetes, high BP, higher cholesterol and triglycerides, increased risk of cancers, acid reflux, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, irregular periods, decreased fertility, different skin rashes, asthma, retinal detachment, prostate issues, kidney stones, ED, heart diseases, lower immunity, poor self-esteem , chronic fatigue.

Yet, we continue to be fixated on eating. We keep after our children to eat, we think thinness is a disease (at least some of us do). We think rest is good, while it never cures anything. It is better to stay somewhat active even when we are sick.

We know that treating obesity is an impossible task. We get burned out trying. Fasting causes us to be more addicted to eating. The body gets used to a high Calorie intake and if we try to fast, we get headaches, nervousness, insomnia, and restlessness. I will call this "relative hunger".

There is no magic diet. Surgery and pills have side effects and work for a short time if there is no permanent shift in our relationship with food.

What I have seen work is very slow and very small decrease in the Calorie intake, small enough not to lead to the torture of relative hunger. It takes time for results.

P. Ghassibi, md
ghassibi@hotmail.com ◊

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TV TALK with BILL CUSHING

"The Diplomat"

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

This month's recommendation is a terrific new series called 'The Diplomat' on Netflix.

It premiered on April 20. It was Created by Debora Cahn, writer of such political dramas as 'The West Wing' and 'Homeland, 'The Diplomat' very much intertwines both of those series. It has enough of West Wing style politics to keep political junkies happy, while maintaining the action and international intrigue of Homeland.

The show features the return to TV of Keri Russell, 5 years after the Emmy winning series 'The Americans' ended. Russell plays Kate Wyler, an experienced diplomat who's worked in trouble zones her whole career. She is getting ready to travel to Kabul and start her new position as the U.S.'s ambassador to Afghanistan. Her husband Hal (Rufus Sewell), another experienced diplomat and former ambassador himself, wants to go with her to help the transition, but she wants him to stay back and think of what his next move will be.

Hal gets a call from one of his contacts about an explosion on a British aircraft carrier. Meanwhile, Kate gets summoned to the White House, where President Rayburn (Michael McKean) tells her that he wants her to fill the vacant ambassadorship in the United Kingdom. Rayburn feels that the UK needs a competent and experienced hand after they discover Iran may be to blame for the aircraft carrier bombing.

Kate resists because she's a boots-on-the-ground diplomat, not interested in a post that will force her to go to ceremonies and other events she considers to be fluff. What she doesn't know is that she is being prepped to replace the Vice President, and the President feels this post will be a good trial run.

Kate, eventually accepts, and being an expert on Iran, doesn't believe for a second that the Iranians are behind the attack on the British vessel. It's going to take some work on her end to convince her U.S. and British colleagues that there may be another culprit.

Amidst all the political negotiations, secret meetings, and instances of intrigue, 'The Diplomat' has quite a bit of humor, much of it in involving Kate's utter disdain for certain aspects of the job, such as photo shoots for glossy magazines and wearing fancy dresses to cocktail parties and high-end dinners. That's not her style, whereas her sophisticated husband Hal looks like he was born for that life.

Kate's relationship with Hal is another story. It appears as though their marriage might not be as solid as it looks. However, it's important to her future as Vice President that they appear strong and stay together.

'The Diplomat' is an intelligent, well-constructed, and well written series, Cahn's West Wing lineage really shows in the dialogue. The conversations are smart, fast, and sharp. The performances are top notch throughout, especially from Russell and Sewell. The witty banter between them is like something out of a 1930s screwball comedy and is one of the highlights of the show.

'The Diplomat' has been an immediate hit and has already been renewed for a second season. All 8 episodes are available to stream on Netflix.

If you have any questions about TV, you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column. Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion. ◊

God's Grace Never Fails!

King David Encounters God's Grace– Part II

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

God Bless you all and welcome back for Part – 2. We ended Part 1 with God sending Nathan to David to deliver a parable-like story extremely shocking that King David became loaded with anger to the point he pronounces a Death Sentence upon the guilty one in Nathan's story. We read Nathan's response in 2 Samuel 12:7, "Then Nathan said to David, "You Are the Man!" NKJV. Then Nathan delivers God's thoughts on the matter and in 2 Samuel 12:12 we read, "For you did it [sin] secretly, but I will do this thing [Grace] before all Israel, before the sun.'" NKJV.

King David, thought by cleverly covering up his tracks he would not get caught. Without God, he most likely would have! But God is all-knowing and informs David through Nathan, that his sin will be made public for all Israel to see! Then, King David tells Nathan in the next verse, 2 Samuel 12:13, "So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." NKJV.

God immediately says and does what only He can say and do, verse 13 continues, 2 Samuel 12:13-14, "And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. 14 However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die." NKJV. Here we read of God's Mercy and Grace extended to King David! WOW!!! We see God's Undeserved, Unearned, and Unmerited Favor on King David, God's Grace prevails in King David's life. King David should have died, but he didn't. Unfortunately, not so for the firstborn of King David's and Bathsheba's son. On the seventh day after being born, the boy dies!

King David expresses his feelings concerning what happened and we can read about it in Psalm 51. Here are some excerpts from Psalm 51:1-4, 7-12, 14, 16-17, "Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your loving kindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge." "7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit." "14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness." "16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart These, O God, You will not despise." NKJV.

The Hebrew word for contrite means to be broken, bruised, crushed, or collapsed. King David was brought by God to the end of himself recognizing his sin as is clearly stated in Psalm 51.

How did King David go from being a King so full of himself to a man that realized that He is nothing without God? The key is found in the story that God gave Nathan to recite word by word to King David. What was it in this story that God used to humble this Mighty King? Nathan's story resonated with King David because as a young Shepherd boy, he was fully aware of what it meant to care for little ewe lambs. We read what lengths he would take in his care for his father's sheep in 1 Samuel 17:34-36, "But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, 35 I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it." NKJV.

King David also knew that God was with him through this as we read in 1 Samuel 17:37, "Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." NKJV.

Just like King David, we have sinned. The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," NKJV. What do we do? We Repent! Which means, having a completely radical change of mind. One minute we think this way and now we think another way. We go from believing that Jesus Christ was not who He said He was to believe that He is our Savior, The Lamb of God who takes away our sins!

We change our thinking and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior! We invite Him into our hearts and He will come in and we go from death to life!

My suggestion after this, get yourself and your family planted into a Local New Testament Church, one that preaches the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Grace of God! The final Scripture comes from Psalm 92:13, "Those who are planted in the house of

Big Blue Swim School Dives into Methuen

Big Blue Swim School Opened its First Massachusetts location on May 1st.

Big Blue Swim School, one of the nation's fastest-growing swim school franchises, announces the opening of its first Massachusetts location in Methuen. Friends & Family lessons and a formal ribbon cutting are scheduled leading up to the first big splash as classes officially commenced Monday, May 1st, at 90 Pleasant Valley St., in Methuen.

The location's owners, Gary Cohen and Melissa Schorr, are a husband-and-wife team who feel passionate about swim safety and Big Blue's mission to empower kids with the skills they need to feel confident in the water.

"We are so honored to bring the first Big Blue Swim School in the state to the Methuen community," says Gary Cohen, Franchise Partner of Big Blue Swim School Methuen. "Not only are we teaching children an important life-saving skill but we're also building confidence that can help them reach their full potential in other activities as they learn and grow."

Big Blue Swim School Methuen will offer weekly, year-round 30 to 45-minute swim lessons for children beginning at just three months old, seven days a week. Level-appropriate, engaging lessons are led by professional instructors. Big Blue sets itself apart from other swim schools with 90-degree, ultra-clean water, a comfortable viewing area to keep an eye on swimmers, plenty of private changing rooms, fall-proof, anti-microbial flooring throughout the facility, free Wi-Fi and ample parking. Additionally, Big Blue's mobile app gives parents the ability to conveniently schedule and coordinate classes for multiple kids simultaneously and track their swimming progress.

"We are so excited to welcome everyone to the first Massachusetts Big Blue Swim School in Methuen," says Chris DeJong, Founder and President of Big Blue Swim School. "With every new pool opening comes the opportunity to create big moments that lead to kids learning they can achieve anything in life."

Opening Details and Events:

For a limited time, families can take advantage of a special rate when they enroll in weekly swim lessons at Big Blue Methuen and will receive their first four weekly lessons for just $79! Their Big Blue Family Fun Day is free, open to the public and set for Saturday, April 29th, from 12 - 4PM.

For more information about the Big Blue Swim School Methuen opening, class schedules, or to enroll, call 978-431-2830 or visit: https://bigblueswimschool.com/locations/massachusetts/methuen ◊

REAL ESTATE: FROM 19

Guthrie Realty Trust & David M Guthrie/David M & Ursula B Guthrie Trs, Patrick & Hannah McWilliams, $845,000, 637 Johnson St

Patrick & Suzanne Wolfgang, Jean Elizabeth Fothergill, $375,000, 1401 Great Pond Rd Unit 17

James Parks & Theresa P Smith, Christine H Pike & Christine H Pike Revocable Trust, $350,000, 350 Greene St Unit 404

Alexander William & Lauren Marie Girroir, Brianne M Kelly, $455,000, 40 Perley Rd

Aaron & Shaina Lewis/Shaina Nicole Marzano , Mohammad Sahab Uddin, $289,000, 1 Walker Rd Unit 1

Shari Lynn Card Tr & William J Driscoll Revocable Trust, Erin N & Felipe M Maia, $750,000, 166 Duncan Dr

Felipe & Erin Maia/Erin Locke, Ross & Berta Krupnik, $470,000, 3 Harvest Dr Unit 304

Phillip Andre Wilson & Robyn Nicola Benstead, Katharina Hariett Morales & Samantha Sebrida Shay, $799,900, 43 Mill Rd

Miriam O'Connor & William H Stacy Est, Jeannene R Tracy, $327,000, 9 Walker Rd Unit 7

Sean & Alexandra L Herbert, William & Jenna Enright, $555,000, 63 Wentworth Ave

Panorama Investment Group LLC, Arash Rahimi & Marzieh Charharlang, $404,600, 18 Village Green Dr Unit 12

Security Eat 639 Inc, FEB Realty Trust LLC, $737,919.54, 170 Salem St

Mark J Vincent & Bonnie W Vincent Trs & Mark J Revocable Trust 2016 & Peter C Vincent, Mark Lemire, $315,000, 148 Main St Unit B531

871 Turnpike LLC, 11-11 Realty Holdings LLC, $255,000, 871 Turnpike St Unit 205/207

James Vincent Santoianni & Patricia Ann Teixeira Santoianni, Huseyin A & Dilek Kara, $975,000, 550 Boxford St

Greg & Sarah Cottone, Sarah J & Daniel P Doherty, $865,000, 231 Chestnut St

Susan Christensen, Nancy Kamau & Stephen Chege, $450,000, 9 Morton St

Meghan H Cheever & Kegan Graham, Peter J Cheever, $270,000, 64 Kingston St Unit 64

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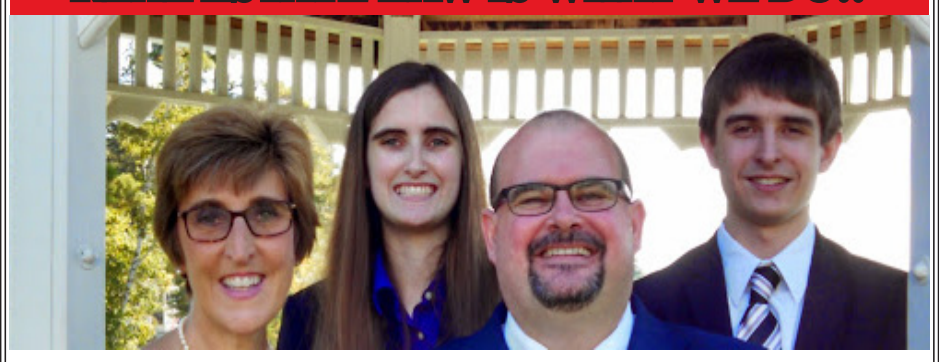

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DISALVO: FROM 9

night, that every day of the week be included except Friday."

"The second is ARTICLE 16 which is a charter change request. By Town Charter, Town Meeting is to be held at a certain Tuesday in May. This would change it to a date in June in order to have, what the petitioner hopes, will be more participation from those who are college students."

HUMANE PET SHOP ORDINACE

"This ordinance would prohibit the sale of dogs and other live animals in town."

"This ordinance would allow for adoptions, but not the sale of live animals."

Asked if this would also cover private individuals selling their pets, DiSalvo said he wasn't sure but didn't think that would be prohibited under this article.

PROPOSED TOWN BUDGET IS $148M◊

What are the two most important financial articles on the North Andover Town Warrant this year?

"There are actually two of them. The first is the Town Budget which is $130M. We are very efficient in North Andover. The public-school budget is about 2/3 of that, not including shared costs of about $60M."

"Our $130M Town Budget is up about 5% from last year. This budget has all the services that our community is responsible for delivering – from schools, to veteran's services, to fire and police and other town services."

"Oddly enough, I suspect we will have more conversation about any of the five other items we just discussed than the $130M Town Budget, and I would argue the budget is far more important."

"One of the other articles that I think is important is our capital budget. That is what we put into buildings in the town. One of them is a $21M article to renovate and put an addition on the Middle School. If passed that will be done without a Proposition 2 ½ override and no tax increase whatsoever, and also potentially without state aid. But, we don't know that at the moment. We hope that the state will help us with some of the building project in town and we anticipate that, but we don't know what the legislature is going to do."

NEW INITIATIVES AT TOWN MEETING

Moderator DiSalvo has been innovative in the way he runs town meeting; we asked him to educate people on what some of those are.

"First, I required a declaration of conflict of interest."

"If anyone comes to the microphone who has an interest, or their family has an interest in the item being discussed, you have to disclose that. And if I find out that someone has a conflict and did not disclose that you are (prohibited) from speaking on that matter."

"The second is: while all the power is in the room, because only people in the room can vote, not all knowledge is in the room at Town Meeting."

"So, I instituted a circumstance, the first in the nation, where one can call or text or email a question – not a comment or a motion – but a question. Then I can direct that question to someone in the room who has an answer. I have seen it now at least twice, where a call-in question from somebody who couldn't attend town meeting (but is a citizen), that changed the debate totally."

"I'm not the speaker of the house, I'm the moderator. I don't express an opinion on any article. In fact, I sign an affidavit on an annual basis that says I have made no public declaration of my personal opinions on any article put forth at the meeting."

NORTH ANDOVER TOWN MEETING IS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL ON MAY 16h!◊

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